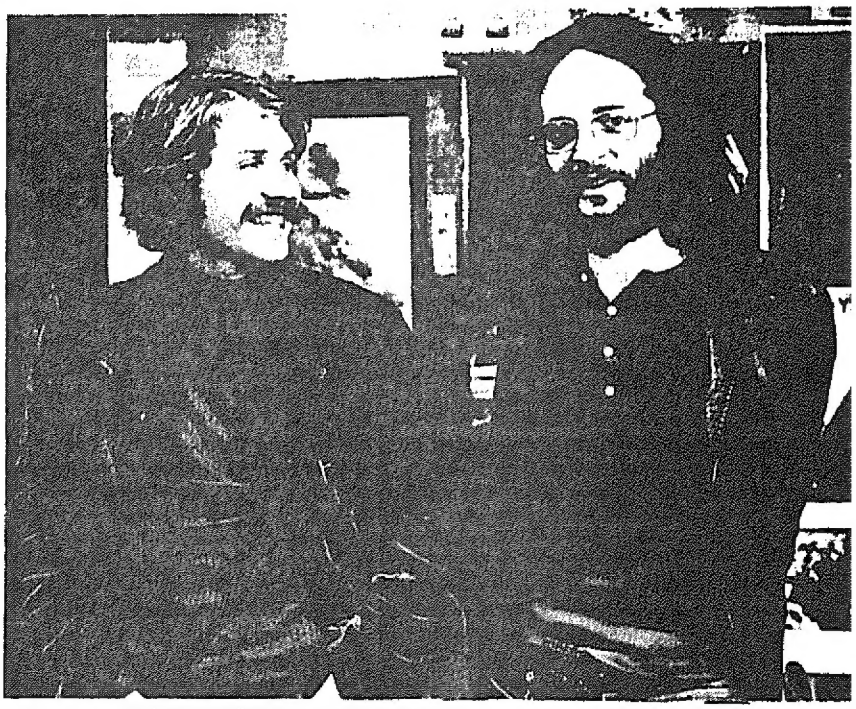
Well, your long wait is over because A YEAR PASSES LIKE NOTHING WITH THE FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS is at the bindery in San Francisco at this moment and should be in your hot hands by the time you get CW. What's Shelton into? He's going on with the ly pages and keeping the faith. With Crumb, Griffin, Moscoso, Spain, he's in ZAP 7, and what you may not know about is ZAM. While everyone was in the area getting ZAP out, they sat down and jammed awhile; result was ZAM, which will be published as a snatch-sized comic. Gilbert has drawn a new WONDER WART-HOG story for the book. Because the WART-HOG anthologies are being printed by different companies, #3 will be out before #2. Both ZAP 7 and WW #3 should be on sale while you read this. At RIP-OFF PRESS, the upstairs has been remodeled. Jaxon is working on illustrations for a book on American Indians to be published by Bellerophon. Rip-Off did the t-shirt which will be your ticket to this year's Berkeley Con. The Con will be held from April 17-20 at UC's Pauley Ballroom. Information on the affair: Joe Vasquez or Nick Marcus. Joe at (415-642-7477). By mail, Berkeley Con/SUPERB/UC Campus/Berk. I've been asked to coordinate a panel and my guests at this point include Lee Marrs, Larry Todd, and Mike Freidrich. Others who are interested should contact me. In July (26-28), I will coordinate a weekend program on American comics past and present through UC and am interested in discussing the event with any artists or fans who would like to partici-

Shelton and Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers

pate. I would like as much variety as possible in the program and intend to rent a number of animated films and to show numerous slides of Golden Age art. A flyer on the weekend will be at my table at the Berkeley Con. . . . MEEF 2 is out (See info and background below). Other new books include: IMAGE OF THE BEAST (first 75¢ B/W ug.) and WIMMEN'S 3 from Last-Gasp/P. O. Box 212, Berkeley, Ca.; TRUCKIN'2, TALES OF THE SPHINX 2 from Print Mint, 830 Folger, Berkeley, Ca. From Canada, ORB MAGAZINE #1, 31 Albany Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, a lot of nice science fiction work by artists like Stan Berneshe, John Allison, and Paul McCusker. . . . Straight Arrow's A HISTORY OF THE UNDERGROUND COMIX is taking shape. I did the annotated bibliography. The book will contain a comprehensive list of all known ug publishers at time of publication. Cover by Rand Holmes, the book is a semi-memoir by New Yorker Mark James Estren, and you'll probably see parts if not all of it at the Con in April. . . . this, from David Tatelman in Washington: "It's easy to think that the world is saturated when you live in Berkeley, but comix have yet to realize their potential everywhere else." I think that's true. People who have known about Crumb and Shelton for a long time due to their national exposure are now beginning to find other cartoonists of interest, and it's likely the demand for comix will increase in the next few years. . . . When you think of animation, you think of cartoons on film, but John Lion's Magic Theatre in San Francisco (1572 California Street) is doing a cartoon



FRED SCHRIER and Dave Sheridan, creators of "Meef Comics"

NARD N' PAT'S OUT. You can get it from Cartoonists Co-op, Box 40474, San F. 94110. 65¢. Kim Deitch's new story "Scooped" will be in THE LEAN YEARS, a new comic by Seigel and Simon, the SAVAGE HUMOR boys. Kim did the cover. COMIX & COMICS will do John Pound's RONALD THE BARBARIAN when the art is finished. Bob Beerbohm tells

In mid-1969, the Overland Vegetable Stagecoach rolled into California carrying a couple of Ohio boys named Fred Schrier and David Sheridan. This dynamic duo settled down in the vicinity of Mill Valley and by October they had the first issue of *Mother's Oats Comix* zapped out of their brains and into the head shops serviced by The Rip-Off Press. The first one was a psychedelic purgative. In the opening story, Dealer McDope discovers a hole in his reality. He slides through like Alice into Wonderland and in the new world he finds that mushrooms have a lot to say if you only listen to them. Back in the real (?) world, he discovers that reality is no longer what he thought it was, an insightful experience not at all alien to those of us who lived those late '60s. Sheridan and Schrier were dealing with levels of reality few cartoonists had attempted in their graphics.

Late that year various artists had begun

on stage. Written by Michael McClure under the influence of ZAP, it features a very Wilsonesque dyke as well as characters like Shitfers, Penguins, and naked tap-dancing stars. McClure has been doing stage cartoons since THE BLOSSOM in 1969 and this one is the first of what he calls The Purple Hero Cycle. Because the hero is a flying purple cock and balls. . . . Down in Seal Beach, John Aulenta is working on PARADISE COMICS . . . To edit WIMMEN'S 4, Shelby, and did you notice that Lee's character on the cover of WIMMEN'S 3 was a nice parody of the cover of Ms. #1? . . . The cartoonist as teacher: Art Speigelman at the Art Academy on Sutter, and now Dan O'Neill at UC Extension. O'Neill has two sections of people learning how to draw the comics. The academy is beginning to notice the comics, but they usually don't know what to do with them. They began in the newspapers so do you teach them in Journalism 1? They're written in English, and they're graphic art, so should they go through English and Art Departments? So tiresome to argue about the validity of comics with people who write books about single lines of Chaucer and can't recognize folk poetry in graphic form. . . . The Nostalgic ORPHAN ANNIE is selling for $4.95 at a lot of department stores. 1974 is her 50th anniversary. Annie Fanny's only 12, but the PLAYBOY collection is back in print, too. It's $2.50. Don't you think Harvey Kurtzman ought to do something to commemorate that Golden anniversary?

me they have a new artist, too, but nobody's saying who he is or what he does yet. Bob compared him to Hal Foster! . . . In San Jose, Bob Sidebottom should have BARBARIAN 3 and CALIFORNIA COMICS 1 fairly soon. Looks like the race is on for the Berkeley Con. About a dozen new books came out for the last one. . . . L. A. COMICS 2 is smooth. 65¢ from P. O. Box 25896, Los Angeles 90025. That's it.

discuss the possibility of an ecology-oriented comic book at The Ecology Center in Berkeley. Out of those meetings evolved the first issue of *Slow Death Funnies*. Gary Arlington suggested the title. Greg Irons did the cover. Sheridan and Schrier contributed stories along with several other artists. Sheridan did "The Burgie Patrol," Schrier "Ecology Mythology." Late that year, Schrier went into the Peace Corps and was assigned to a tour of duty in Afghanistan. While there, he did "Word Salad," "Mean Mr. Mustard, the Balloon Salesman," and "The Bubble Blowers" for *Mother's Oats* No. 2 (Rip-Off Press, 1970). He completed one full book, *The Balloon Vendor* (Rip-Off, 1971), and most of his newest book, *Meef*, before returning to the states in October of 1972. Stylistically, both of these artists do a great deal of improvising and experimenting with theme, content, and structure. Their work is more surrealistic than realistic and neither hesitates to deviate from reality upon impulse. Reading their work gives one the feeling that all things, animate or inanimate, are alive and worthy of consideration. A character in *The Balloon Vendor* runs from a herd of singing vegetables. In "The Bubble Blowers," a calm, ordinary little man is shaken-up when he gets on a bus filled with dozens of men who look exactly like him.

Sheridan and Schrier delight in violating all of the conventions of the comic book form. In "Fun House," Sheridan bends and warps the normal panels of a page to suit a character's own distorted perception of reality. There may be a story line, but it is never what the reader could have anticipated.

Where did *Meef* come from?

Fred Schrier told me it came out of a can of red paint in the hand of a freaked-out sculptor in a kitchen in Cleveland, Ohio. That worthy painted *"MEEF"* all over everything, including the refrigerator.

Like most of Schrier's work, *Meef* is set in a dream world. What you think is real most likely isn't.

"It's not a comic book," says Fred.

"Call it people's fine art," adds Dave.

I've always known the underground comix were that.